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TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB 0869 – Primary and Secondary Education – Concentration of Poverty
School Grant Program – Eligibility (**SUPPORT**)

The Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 869. President Ferguson's bill seeks to decrease the concentration of poverty level required for eligibility under the Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program within certain fiscal years.

The Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program provides funding to schools with specified concentrations of poverty to hire a community school coordinator and school health care practitioner, as well as provide wrap-around services to promote student achievement, learning, and well-being. Such services provided under similar community school programs have shown to improve attendance, increase trust among the school community, raise high school graduation rates, and reduce racial and economic achievement gaps—all of which led to an exceptional return on investment.¹ This bill lowers the concentration of poverty threshold needed to receive personnel grants from 60% to 55% for fiscal year 2024 and each subsequent year. It also lowers the threshold required to receive per pupil grants from 70% to 65% in fiscal year 2024, and from 65% to 60% for fiscal year 2025 and each year thereafter. These changes will allow more schools and students to receive the benefits of the program sooner.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee

¹ Anna Maier et al., *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence*, LEARNING POL'Y INST. (2017).